

ISSUE #17

JACKDAW

FOR REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISM

MAY DAY 2024 EDITION

FREE



OPEN LETTER TO ANTI-MILITARISTS

The military, the media and politicians are gearing up for a Third World War with warmongering talk.

We had British Defence Secretary Grant Shapps telling us that Britain was *"moving from a post-war to pre-war world."*



Two top Estonian defence officials took advantage of a meeting with counterparts from Latvia and

Lithuania and a visit from US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin to argue for preparedness for war with Russia. The head of the Norwegian army, General Eirik Kristoffersen also added his two bits, saying that a Russian attack would

come within three years and that Norwegians should be ready for war and should stockpile essentials. Earlier, a scare story in the German newspaper Bild declared that Russia was planning for an offensive against the Baltic countries. This was based on a possible scenario as envisaged by German army generals, which draws a picture of all-out war between Russia and NATO by 2025.

His counterpart in Sweden, Commander-in-Chief Mikael Bydén also emphasised war preparedness, as did the head of NATO, Admiral Rob Bauer, at a summit meeting.

The British media avidly took this up. The Daily Telegraph screamed that *"Britain must prepare for war. America won't save us this time."* The Sun also babbled about *"wars in Russia, China, Iran and North Korea in five years,"* whilst the Daily Mail envisaged war with Russia in the next 20 years and that Britons should prepare for cataclysmic circumstances and conscription. The right wing rag The Spectator quoted Shapps and said that *"the West must stop playing Mr Nice Guy."* (..CONTINUED INSIDE)



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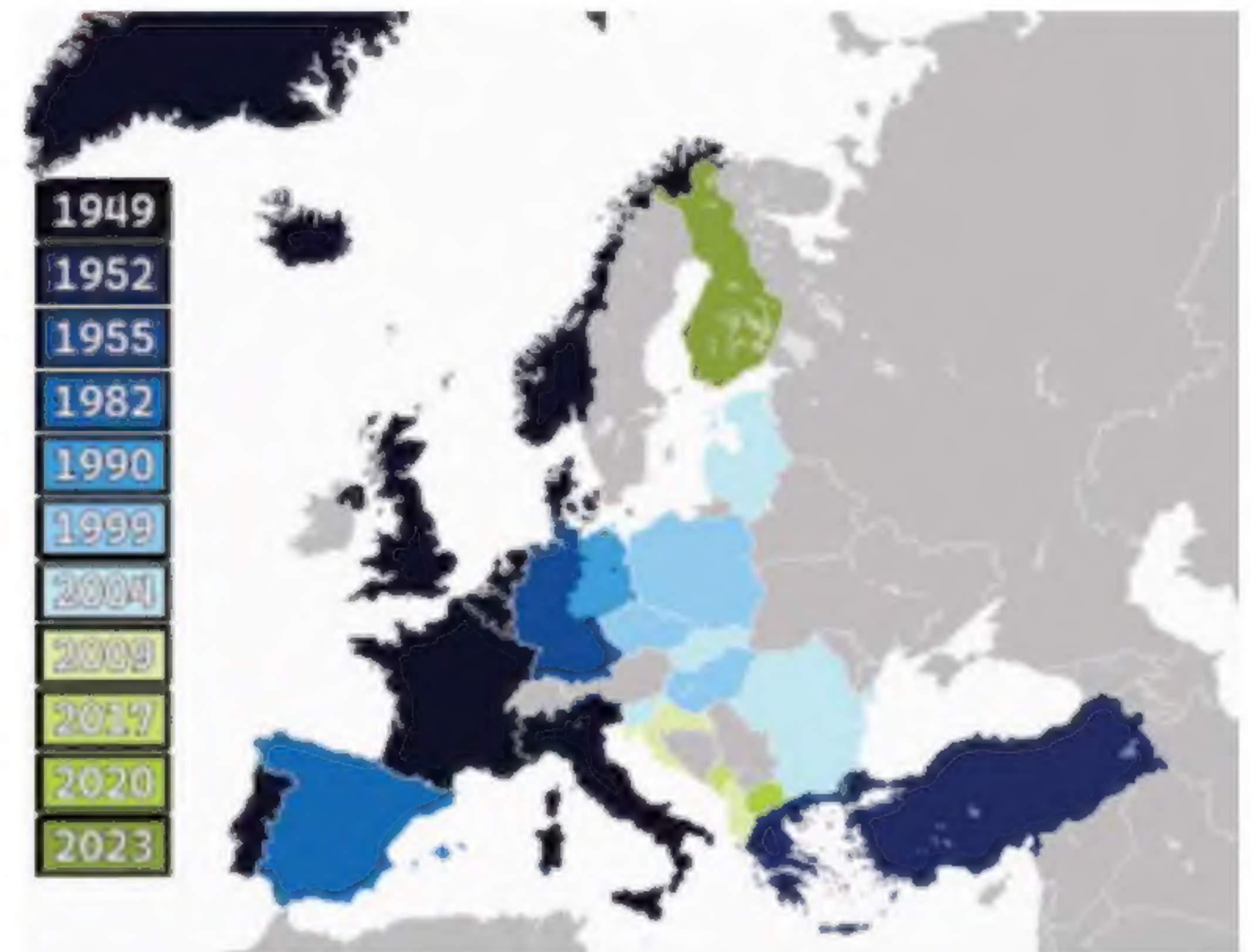
The British press media took up the subject of conscription with zeal, emboldened by comments by Army chief Sir Patrick Sanders at the International Armoured Vehicles conference in Twickenham, that Britain must engage with Russia in a future war, that conscription should be considered, as well as the raising of a 'citizen army.' He was backed up on this by a so-called 'expert,' Professor Anthony Glees, from the University of Buckingham, who said that conscription must be prepared for within six years unless Putin is defeated. "I would see a 'limited conscription', a call-up of incentivised volunteers, as being very much on the cards if Putin is now thrown out of Ukraine. Obviously, if there were a wider European or world war conscription would follow at once."

Another military beast, the former NATO commander General Sir Richard Shirreff also waded in, talking about a situation where men as old as 60 would be conscripted, and that this conscription would involve hundreds of thousands. Another general, General Sir Nick Parker, also intervened, backing Sanders, as did Professor Michael Clarke of the Department of War Studies at King's College. The defence Editor of the London Evening Standard, Robert Fox, also wrote about the need for part-time or full-time national service.

The discredited Boris Johnson took advantage of the situation to write in a newspaper column that he would "jolly well" join the British Army "to fight the Russian threat Johnson, an enthusiastic backer of the Zelenskyy regime, supported the call to use conscription to train and equip a "citizen army."

Despite this barrage from assorted generals, academics, politicians and press hacks, a recent survey indicated that only one in ten would be willing to join up, with more than 50% not supporting a return of conscription.

Against this militaristic hype, action and agitation against the arms trade, against conscription and the armed forces themselves needs to be stepped up. The orchestrated campaign by the USA and its allies and the military chiefs throughout Europe, are meant to distract us from the dire economic situation, to reinforce the idea of nationhood, to bolster the profits of the arms traders.



We call on all of those opposed to militarism, to the arms trade, and to conscription to come together to form an anti-militarist, anti-conscription alliance. We need to do this as a matter of urgency to actively counter the sabre rattling and the calls for conscription through propaganda, meetings, and rallies. We urge your group or organisation to seriously consider this initiative.

Neither Moscow nor NATO No to Militarism and Conscription

LAND REFORM BILL 2024

Latest Land Reform Bill: A 'disappointment' for campaigners

Yet again, the Scottish government fails to tackle head on the huge inequalities in landownership.

The 2024 bill was introduced into the Scottish Parliament in March, delayed from 2023. It largely relates to reform of agricultural tenancies but 25% relates to land reform.

According to the Scottish Greens,

who are part of the government (<https://greens.scot/land-reform-faq>):

The Bill introduces measures in the following key areas:

- **Ministers will have the power to break up large land holdings when they come up for sale, if it is deemed to be in the public interest.** Sale of land holdings >1000 hectares will be prohibited until Scottish Ministers have considered the impact on the local community. This could lead to such large land holdings being put up for sale in smaller lots.
- **Communities will be given advance notice of their right to buy lots up for sale.** Communities will be given advanced notice of sales of certain large land holdings – this will empower them to purchase lots through Community Right to Buy laws. This could bring more land into community ownership and put to use for the wider benefit of the community.
- **Large landowners must produce Land Management Plans, through engagement with the local community, to deliver actions to meet net zero targets and benefit**

communities. Landowners will also need to consider community requests to lease land. A new post of Land and Communities Commissioner will also be established to independently support the creation and implementation of land management plans.

- **A new type of tenancy will be created, which encourages more diverse use of Scotland's land.** Land Management Tenancies will create a new option for tenant farmers who want to do more than just agricultural activity on their land, encouraging sustainable and regenerative farming practices which brings nature restoration, forestry and rewilding together with food production.

Many land reform campaigners are disappointed. According to Andy Wightman:

- The Bill leaves a lot of important detail to be worked out later in secondary legislation. This is not an ideal approach.
- The Bill does not include important recommendations from the Scottish Land Commission nor does it implement many of the proposals raised in the consultation. There is no Public Interest test, no strengthening of the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement, and no restrictions on land ownership to EU and UK registered entities for example.

Given the scope of coverage of the proposals, the nature of the land market in Scotland, the complexities of the Right to Buy and the absence of a Public Interest test, the Bill is unlikely to have any meaningful impact on the pattern of landownership in Scotland.

Land Reform legislation depends on the political will to implement it. According to many, the Scottish government has not shown this will. It all

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Landownership is the most important factor in how land is used and **who benefits** from its potential.

This means relatively **few people** have **enormous power** in deciding how a lot of Scotland's natural assets are used.

Concentrated landownership has huge impacts on issues such as **how we tackle the climate and biodiversity crises**, how **food** is produced, the supply of **affordable housing**, and how **just** our society is.

SCOTLAND'S
FOR SALE!
BUT WHO IS BUYING...?

IMPACTS TODAY

It is no coincidence that **Scotland's land is exhausted, depopulated, and lacking in biodiversity.**

When **land is used primarily for profit**, and decision making is in the **hands of the few**, land use is not treated with the **sustainability and wellbeing** of the majority in mind. This trend has only continued into **other profitable activities** – such as commercial forestry and **carbon offsetting**.

Changes have happened in recent decades through land reform, but **more needs to be done** to tackle Scotland's archaic patterns of land ownership.

SCOTLAND'S
FOR SALE!
BUT WHO IS BUYING...?

looks good on paper, as if they are challenging the concentration of private ownership, but very little is likely to happen.

Private landowners have a huge amount of power, and that includes the new 'green' lairds. They can easily argue that they are managing land for the public good. For example, Seafield and Strathspey Estates argued that land concentration is not a bad thing, as it may lead to more efficient management. Seafield and Strathspey Estates is a 35,000 ha (86,000 acres) enterprise which includes salmon beats on the River Soey and is managed on behalf of the family of the Earl of Seafield. It said landowners were being blamed for the inefficiencies of local and central government. "There is a myth presented by individuals sponsoring land reform in Scotland that 'too many acres are owned by too few individuals.' It may be true that 'many acres are owned by few individuals' but there is very little evidence presented to show that this is a bad thing".



The organisation representing Scotland's private land owners, pays lip service to compliance with the spirit of the reforms. On the website of Scottish Land and Estates, they have set out a Landowners' Commitment, setting out "good practice for landowners on how they can continue to operate their businesses, while contributing to the public good. It is flexible according to the nature and scale of individual situations, and can be used for all types and sizes of landholding."

The Scottish government, including the Greens, seem happy to believe the landowners, trusting them to do the right thing by the public. This can be seen in the watered down proposals in the 2024 Bill as well as the luke-warm implementation of the reforms so far.

Who owns the land matters!

Community Land Scotland, representing community landowners, who make up close to 3% of total land holdings, is highly critical of the government's land reforms initiatives and has launched its own campaign for radical land reform. "Scotland's experience of land reform is often described as a journey, if that is the case then our journey is stalling and all but ground to a halt. Community ownership of land has flat lined since 2016/17 when the last piece of Land Reform legislation was introduced – only 16 hectares of land went into community ownership in 2021/22. Less than 3% of Scotland's land is in community ownership and patterns of private landownership remain highly concentrated. Progress has slowed dramatically because the existing legislation is not working and soaring land prices make ownership the preserve of a privileged elite."

They have no time for the rhetoric of landowners who claim to be operating in the public interest when in fact profit is their main motive and everything they do



is a public relations exercise. Who owns the land matters! Only community and other forms of collective ownership will ensure that land is managed for the public good- both the community and the environment.

<https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/land-reform-campaign/>

<https://andywrightman.scot/2024/03/land-reform-bill-1-2/>

<https://scotlandandestates.co.uk/about-us/landowners-commitment/>

<https://www.communitylandscotland.org.uk/scotlands-land-reform-journey-is-stalling/>

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT?

What a waste of space these politicians are. You'd like to shove your boss's head down the toilet bowl? How come you've got to scrape by on a crap wage on a zero hours contract while the rich are raking it in for doing sod all? That you don't agree with all this racial prejudice and xenophobia. You're worried sick about climate change. You're all for the equality of the sexes. Homophobia and transphobia make you angry. You're asking why are there so many starving people in the world? Wars all around the world and arms manufacturers making obscene profits. Why do we need borders? I think the working class should get together and boot out all the bosses and politicians.

THEN YOU MIGHT JUST BE AN ANARCHIST COMMUNIST!

THE BAD OLD DAYS

We don't need to tell you just how bad things are for ordinary working class people. And it's getting worse—unemployment, zero hours contracts, low wages, long working hours, poverty, war and threat of war, homelessness, inequality, pollution and climate change, and countless other things. But whose fault is it? Who's to blame? Us? Anarchist troublemakers? The working class? Obviously not. It's all down to the rich and their toadying politicians, whatever party they belong to. No one is serious about tackling things like climate change when there are profits to be made.

LABOUR, TORY, SAME OLD STORY

Deep down you know they're all the same. Whoever's in power, the boss is still the boss, the rich are still rich and we're getting shat on. Anarchist Communists aren't interested in getting into power. We want to see power and wealth shared by everyone. Anarchist Communists believe in everyone having their say and everyone having an equal share of the good things to be had. Impossible? Read on...



GOVERNMENT IS SLAVERY



All government looks after the interests of the boss class.

Governments keep us in line and make sure we do as we're told and serve the bosses well. And if we don't, governments have laws to give us the sack, arrest us, fine us, lock us up, beat us up, harass us, deport and even kill us. Government is there to look after the system which puts making profits before the well-being of ordinary people, the system known as capitalism.

STICK TOGETHER

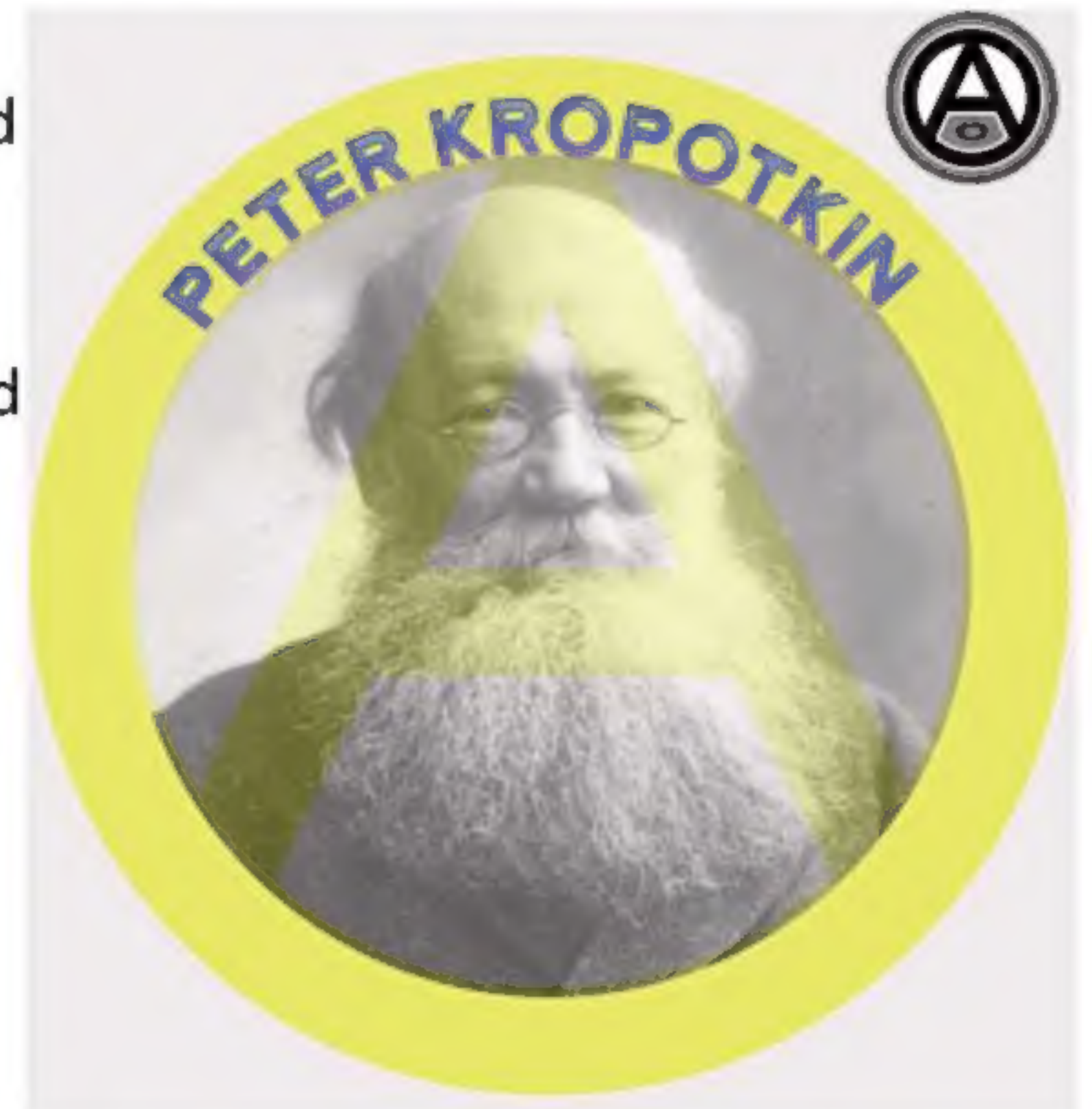
We don't need the bosses, they need us. They are scared of us. If you go on strike, the bosses will use any method be it scabs, police, fascists or the lying mass media to get us grovelling again. But if we stick together, we are strong enough to get what we want and not

what the boss wants. We've won before, we forced them to scrap the Poll Tax back in the 1990s because people stuck together and didn't pay.

Everything we have, we had to fight for. Nothing is given freely by bosses. Now think bigger, imagine the working class as a whole sticking together. Just think of the potential power we already have. Used properly, we could sort out the bosses, their hangers-on and their system once and for all.

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM: FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

Instead of paying some smoothie loads of money to burble on in parliament, we can make real decisions affecting our lives, our hopes and dreams. We can create our own organisations where all can have a say, with not a politician in sight. Instead of allowing the bosses to bleed us dry, we could control production, distribution, healthcare, education, services, and make all decisions from our own workplace and street organisations. These in turn would be federated into regional, territorial and international organisations, all controlled by ordinary people. And because everything is not organised simply to make profits for the rich, everything will be geared towards what people actually need, the benefits of all work being shared equally by all in the community. With us in control, not driven by the desperate need for profit and growth at all costs, we can stop and reverse climate change. This is anarchist communism and by communism we don't mean the crap they used to have in Russia which was nothing but State-run capitalism.



WOW!

Bit of a tall order this you might think. True, but if you agree that things are definitely getting worse, and if you look at the rate the boss class is destroying the planet and everything that lives on it, the choice is clear: anarchist communism or annihilation. What have we got to lose? We've a long way to go and to begin with, we need to build a movement that can both spread the anarchist communist message and not be afraid to fight the forces of government and capitalism. The Anarchist Communist Group has this goal in mind. Are you with us? Like what you read? Want to know more about anarchist communism? Want to know more about the ACG, which is fighting for a new society without oppression, poverty, wars, borders and environmental destruction? Look at our website: anarchistcommunism.org and considering joining us!

THE HISTORY OF MAY DAY

"The first of May is the symbol of a new era in the life and struggle of the toilers, an era that each year offers the toilers fresh, increasingly tough and decisive battles against the bourgeoisie, for the freedom and independence wrested from them, for their social ideal."

Nestor Makhno

The idea of turning the 1st of May into a day of action for workers was first proposed at the 4th congress of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). It was decided to launch, starting from the 1st of May 1886, a wide campaign of agitation and struggle focused on limiting the working week to forty hours. The most radical actions took place in Chicago. At that time, Chicago had the most developed workers movement in the USA with a strong anarchist presence.

Following the 1st of May 1886, strikes were still ongoing as the fight with employers became tougher. On the 4th of May, a meeting gathering around 15,000 people was attacked by police. By the end of the day, both sides had suffered numerous dead and wounded. It was a perfect occasion to muzzle the protest. Eight of the main organisers, all anarchists, were arrested and sentenced to death. The sentence was turned to life imprisonment for three of them.

On 11 November 1887, Albert Parsons, Adolphe Fischer, George Engel and August Spies were hanged. Their comrade Louis Lingg committed suicide the day before to avoid execution. A few years later, they were acquitted of all charges and the court admitted that the police and justice system set up the case to criminalise and break down the workers' movement.

The eight accused were declared innocent and the three survivors set free.

The 1st of May is definitely a page of workers history stained with anarchist blood.

State, Police and Capital

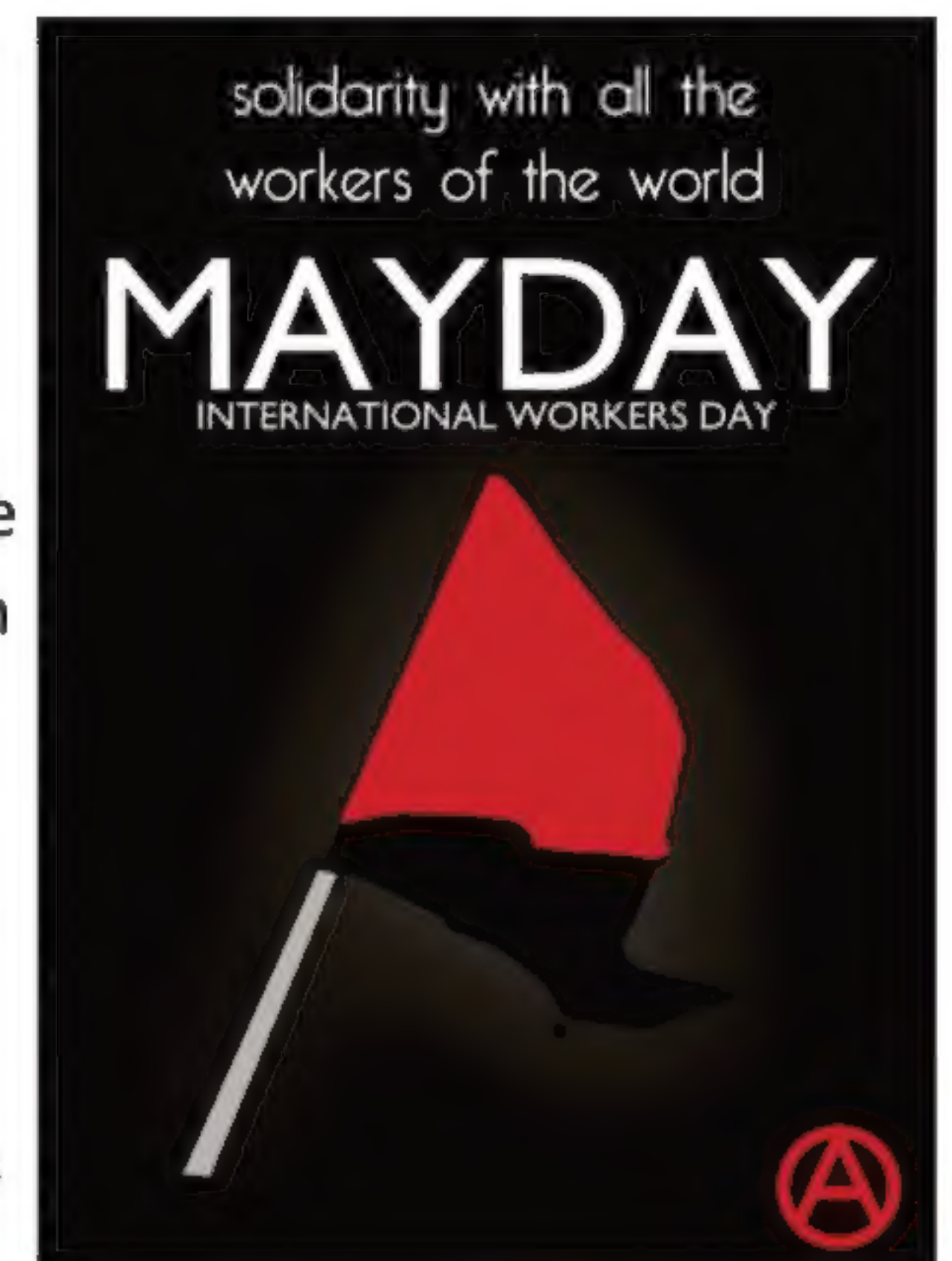
The 1st of May is an occasion to remind us that the fight against capitalism is still going on. Nowadays in Europe, strikes and social struggles are seriously discredited. Yet, the difference between rich and poor keeps growing, the financial markets are back in the saddle and traders are still handling billions of dollars. Are we wrong to ask for more when half of the world's wealth is owned by 1% of the population? Meanwhile, workers are asked to make more and more effort to "save" the economy and put the State back on its feet with its batch of new taxes (such as the bedroom tax) and cuts in public services. We are heading toward a neo-liberal capitalist system in which the State's main purpose is to maintain social control so capitalism can develop without constraint.

Workers are producing everything and yet they own very little. This analysis is old and well known but despite it, workers in Europe slowly give up the fight for a fair redistribution and instead just hope that troubles will fall on someone else. In addition, work has been sanctified so that the idea is widespread that if you don't want to be a good worker that produces and obeys it makes you lazy, a parasite or an idealist (choose yours!).

The coronavirus has highlighted the uselessness of many jobs and accentuated the importance of others.

As anarchist communists, we think that human beings shouldn't be defined by the surplus value they bring to capitalism. Work should be the way to produce by necessity and not to create new needs. Work must be organised so everyone can work less, and for means other than profitability. No capitalist society will ever achieve full employment because it needs a pool of unemployed people so the necessity to work can make us accept bad working conditions. In order to reorganise work, we need a society free from class and leaders, and in which society is managed in a self-organised way. This is what the Anarchist Communist Group is fighting for.

It's well over a century since the first May Day demo. Now we slowly amble through the streets to end up listening to boring speeches from union bureaucrats. You have to remind yourselves that May Day was once upon a time when workers all around the globe showed off their collective strength. But we can do it again. We need revolutionary politics that can lead us to a free, just and equal society. – a society where production is to satisfy needs, not make huge profits for a tiny privileged elite.



CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY ON MAY 1ST WITH RED AND BLACK CLYDESIDE

SPEAKERS! STALLS! SONGS! REFRESHMENTS!

WED 1 MAY

7 - 9 PM

RED ROSA'S

**195 LONDON ROAD
GLASGOW - G40 1PA**

MAY DAY!

nwbwglasgow@protonmail.com

**red and
black
clydeside**

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY ON MAY 1ST WITH RED AND BLACK CLYDESIDE

The Anarchist Communist Group (ACG) is a revolutionary anarchist communist organisation which is dedicated to seeking a complete transformation of society, and the creation of anarchist communism.

This will mean the working class overthrowing capitalism, abolishing the State, getting rid of exploitation, hierarchies and oppressions, and halting the destruction of the environment. To do this, we believe it is important to be organised.

We are committed to building an effective organisation that works towards the common goal of anarchist communism, in cooperation with other working class organisations and in grass roots campaigns. We strive to base all our current actions on the principles that will be the basis of the future society: mutual aid, solidarity, collective responsibility, individual freedom and autonomy, free association and federalism.



Stormy Petrel

Theoretical Journal of the Anarchist Communist Group



Anarchist Communist Group

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www.anarchistcommunism.org

REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE NEWS